

January 11, 1974

COMMONS DEBATES

9275

Oral Questions

Mr. Stanfield: Mr. Speaker, my question is this: Is it the position of the Prime Minister and his government that it is preferable to follow policies which make life practically impossible for the unorganized worker and destroy the savings of the little man who is trying to save some money, while creating thousands of new millionaires who are able to take advantage of the situation.

Mr. Trudeau: No, Mr. Speaker.

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NATIONAL SECURITY

ACTIVITIES OF COMMUNICATIONS BRANCH OF NATIONAL RESEARCH COUNCIL—SUGGESTED TRANSFER ELSEWHERE

Mr. David Lewis (York South): Mr. Speaker, I want to ask the Prime Minister a question regarding the special communications branch in the National Research Council to which reference was made yesterday and I think the day before. Has the government given consideration to the propriety of a middle power like Canada being involved in intercepting and decoding foreign information not so much for its own use but for the use of one of the super powers? Is such an activity of value to Canada's own interests or does it merely underline Canada's satellite position in international affairs?

Right Hon. P. E. Trudeau (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, the government has assessed from time to time its activities in this general area, and I say "general" because I am not agreeing with the facts as stated by the hon. gentlemen. We have assessed it from time to time and we have decided to continue any security and intelligence activities which are of benefit to Canada and to discontinue any which might be of benefit merely to a foreign power.

Mr. Lewis: Mr. Speaker, in view of the fact the National Research Council obviously is not the appropriate agency for such an operation and that consequently the president and the council are made responsible for a division about which they probably know nothing and over which they have no control, may I ask the Prime Minister whether the government would consider taking this operation out of the National Research Council and placing it in a more appropriate department such as the RCMP or National Defence or under the super-spy, the Secretary of State for External Affairs?

Mr. Trudeau: Mr. Speaker, I am not prepared to confirm the existence of the operations the hon. member has mentioned in his allegations, but I am happy to take note that he says there are some areas of government where spying operations should be conducted and I will consider his suggestions.

Mr. Lewis: I have a final supplementary, Mr. Speaker, because I do believe that these matters are of importance to this country. I want to ask the Prime Minister the following question. In view of the fact Canada has a normal avenue of co-operation with the United States and other countries, such as the co-operation between the RCMP and the FBI in the United States, between the

Department of State and embassies in Washington and between the Department of External Affairs and embassies in Ottawa, may I ask the Prime Minister whether the time has not come for the Canadian authorities to cease to have anything to do with the CIA in the United States which has been involved in some of the most discreditable actions across the world?

• (1130)

Mr. Trudeau: Mr. Speaker, the RCMP, when it deals with its opposite numbers in other countries, is not making a judgment on the policies of the governments which our government has judged to be friendly and allied. The CIA is the organization set up by the responsible government in the United States. If my hon. friend has some representations to make against them, I would gladly convey them through the proper channels if he wants to transmit them to me.

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[Translation]

UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE

ALLEGED DELAY IN PAYMENT OF BENEFITS IN QUEBEC REGION

Mr. Gilles Caouette (Charlevoix): Mr. Speaker, I wish to ask a question to the Minister of Manpower and Immigration.

In view of the numerous applications for unemployment insurance which are withheld in the Quebec City regional office because the notices of termination of employment have supposedly not been received yet, can the minister give the House guarantees that he will have an inquiry made in the Quebec office, because checks with recipients have revealed that two, three, or even four notices have been addressed to the office? Will the minister inquire and tell the House what decision he intends to take concerning this problem?

[English]

Hon. Robert K. Andras (Minister of Manpower and Immigration): Mr. Speaker, I will certainly inquire. If the hon. member has details regarding the particular firms or locations involved, they would be of help to me. I must say, however, that the responsibility for producing the necessary evidence, which includes indication of severance, is a fundamental requirement for entitlement under the act, and that responsibility lies with the employer and the claimant, although we will do everything we can to help expedite it.

OBJECTION BY TORONTO TRANSIT COMMISSION TO PREMIUM INCREASE—POSSIBILITY OF LEGISLATION AMENDING ACT

Mr. Lincoln M. Alexander (Hamilton West): Mr. Speaker, I wonder if the minister is aware or has received notice of the objection by the Toronto Transit Commission which seeks some relief from the increase in unemployment insurance premiums as the cost to the commission will be approximately \$1 million in 1974, some \$450,000 more than in 1973? Has he received such a statement of concern and, if so, what has been his reply?

TRUDEAU, Elliott
(orig under CIA4 CANADA)